

Celebrating Cinco de Mayo

The Story of Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo honors the day when Mexican troops saved the city of Puebla. This was a great day in Mexican history.

In 1862 the French army marched into Mexico. France wanted to make Mexico part of its empire. The Mexican people did not want to be ruled by France. They wanted to remain their own country. The Mexican army was not as large as the French army. The Mexican army was not as well armed as the French army. Against the odds, the Mexican army won. The Battle of Puebla took place on May 5, 1862. In Spanish, Cinco de Mayo means "Fifth of May." It became a symbol of Mexican unity and patriotism.

The Celebration of Cinco de Mayo

Today, Cinco de Mayo is a bigger holiday in the United States than in Mexico. Puebla, where the battle took place, still celebrates the victory. Mexican Americans in the United States celebrate with festivals. The festivals include parades, music, traditional foods, and dancing.



A Cinco de Mayo Tradition

Piñatas are a big part of Cinco de Mayo festivals. These colorful objects are filled with candy treats for children. To play the piñata game, the piñata is hung out of reach of the children. One at a time, a child is blindfolded and then given a bat to try to break the piñata. It is not an easy task. Once the piñata is broken, all the treats spill to the ground and are quickly gathered by all the children.

To make a simple piñata you need these materials:

- a balloon
- strips of newspaper
- paper mâché (a mixture of flour and water)
- tissue paper in many colors
- glue
- string
- knife or sharp scissors

Begin by inflating the balloon. Completely cover the balloon with the newspaper strips dipped in paper mâché. Allow the paper mâché covering to dry completely. Cut small squares of different colors of tissue paper. Scrunch the squares of tissue paper over the eraser end of a pencil. Then dip the center part of the tissue square into glue and attach it to the balloon. Continue until the balloon is completely covered with squares of tissue paper.

Once the glue has dried, cut a small opening in the top of the piñata using a knife or sharp scissors. Fill the piñata with candy or other treats. Cover the opening. Tie a string to hang the piñata. You are now ready to play the piñata game!

